EXECUTE.
THE ULTIMATE MOBILE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE
Design Guide
Design a mobile shopping experience that will delight customers

Discover:

- How to set the stage for design with critical exploratory questions
- How to optimize each of your site components and pages to increase conversions
- The design best practices that we’ve used to help global retailers increase their revenue by millions
Why Does Mobile Design Matter?

Imagine if your brand could only reach customers via mobile device.

The day when this becomes reality may not be far off. Over two-thirds of US consumers under 50 say they would be happy if shopping evolved into a mobile-only experience, recent survey research found. What would this mean for how you design and deliver an optimal mobile shopping experience?

*How would you take advantage of limited screen real estate?*

*How would you make the browsing and buying process as intuitive and streamlined as possible?*

*How would you deliver just the right amount of product information?*

This guide will lead you through the process of designing the best mobile web experience possible for your customers. The questions we ask you to consider and the best practices we recommend are based on our work with leading global brands and are meant to empower you to design a site that integrates the mobile use cases of your customers, the specifications of the mobile devices you’re building for and the scope of your existing digital assets. This guide will also help you manage your relationship with the design and development team (whether internal or external) responsible for creating your mobile shopping experience. The questions we focus on here are ones that they should be asking you at each stage of the project.

Within these pages, we’ll discuss each component and page type likely to be included on your mobile site and help you to understand which design option for each makes sense for the volume of information you’re presenting, the nature of the product you’re selling and the tech savviness of the audience you’re targeting.
Before You Begin

Good design starts with a clear vision. If you don’t know what you want to achieve, evaluating the success of what you’ve created becomes difficult. These are the initial exploratory questions that will set you up for an efficient design process.

- Do you have a vision for your mobile project? What are you expecting to achieve with this project?
- What KPIs do you plan to measure?
- Who are your anticipated site users?
- What is the user’s primary goal when coming to your site?
- What is the anticipated primary action for the user to take when visiting your site?
- Do you have an existing mobile site and/or app?
  - What do you like about your existing site/app’s design?
  - What do you dislike about your existing site/app’s design?
- Do you have existing brand guidelines? While an external solution provider can work from your desktop site, clear brand guidelines make their design process more efficient.
- Are there any mobile sites, apps, or projects that you can point to as examples of work you like?
  - What is it specifically about these projects that you like?
- Are there any mobile sites, apps, or projects that represent examples of work you don’t like?
  - What is it specifically about these projects that you dislike?
- Due to the smaller screen real estate on mobile devices, you’ll often have to make information architecture decisions to focus the user’s attention on the main CTA on a page. These decisions should be based on what the core goal for users is on each page. Can you describe the core user flow for your site from initial load all the way to goal completion?

What do customers value most in a mobile shopping experience?

- Ease of navigation (87%)
- Visual displays of information (76%)
- Easy checkout process (70%)
- Fast load times (70%)
Images & Navigation

Depending on the technical approach you choose, you may be able to reuse existing art assets on your desktop website, however, there can be times when hero/banner images, images with lots of text, or images with atypical dimensions don’t work when presented on a smaller screen. Often we recommend several possible solutions for this content:

- **The design team can create mobile-specific images for these sections.** This option is best if these images rarely change or do not need to be changed on a short timeline. Designers can work with your existing imagery or directly with you to create new assets from existing assets that will match the look and feel of the mobile site.

- **You can create mobile-specific images for these sections and host them on the desktop site.** This option is best if you would like to have full control over the content provided and easily change or switch in new images.

- **You can create mobile-specific images and have your development team code these images into the site.** This option is best if you would like to have control over the creation of the assets but don’t need to change the images often or on a short timeline.

Mobile devices have high-density screens which means you often need to source larger assets than are used on the desktop site even though they’re being displayed on smaller screens. If non-retina images are displayed on a retina device, they often look blurry or pixelated. We recommend one of two solutions for providing retina-quality images:

- **If you have an image service that you use for desktop, you can access higher quality versions of the assets by using an alternate URL or query string.** This is the best solution for images on your site, as designers will then have access to every image at any quality necessary.

- **You can use the desktop images by displaying them at half the size of the original source.** This is the best solution if there are no larger images available. Often, this works for thumbnail images or other smaller images.
Site Components

**Header & Navigation**

The header is often the first place your site visitors’ eyes will land. Due to the fact that screen real estate is limited, it’s important to condense the information in the header as much as possible while still providing access to all necessary actions and information. We recommend providing, at a minimum, the navigation, search, cart, and site logo in the header.

To best accommodate the smaller screen size on mobile, we recommend collapsing the navigation under an icon. Adding a label to the icon can be a good way to indicate where your navigation lives, as some users may not be familiar with the standard iconography used to indicate menus, search, or carts. That said, labels on the header icons can also cause unnecessary visual clutter if your customers already understand the meaning of the icons.

If your site has any additional subnavigation in the header, such as ‘Sign In’, or ‘Order Status’, we recommend moving those into the navigation. A secondary treatment for this content will differentiate it from your main navigation while still providing easy access to the content for users who are looking for it.

**Navigation**

Depending on the level of depth present in your navigation, we recommend one of several types of navigation for your site:

**OFF-CANVAS/SIDEBAR NAVIGATION**

The navigation is present in a drawer that slides in from the left side of the page. This is best for sites where users often navigate between different categories and shop around instead of following a single path to purchase. It also handles deep navigations very well, as it maintains context for the user while still giving them access to deep links. If you have a supernav or hover navigation menu with many subcategories, this is a good choice.
PUSH DOWN NAVIGATION
This navigation works by revealing the navigation underneath the header and pushing the content down the page. This is best for sites where the user rarely needs to open the navigation to move between categories and instead chooses a primary category and follows a single path to purchase. It is an often used navigation pattern, so users who are less tech savvy will likely have a better understanding of how the navigation works. This navigation often works best when there are not many deep navigation links or subcategories.

POPOVER NAVIGATION
This navigation works by covering the currently open page with the navigation pane. Similar to the push down navigation, this is a safer navigation pattern for less technical users. This is best for sites where there are few navigation items and the user does not require context for their current page. It’s best for sites where the navigation is the primary way to move through the site.

TABBED NAVIGATION
Unlike the other navigation methods, this navigation is not collapsed under an icon. Instead, all available navigation items are shown in the header at all times. This navigation type is best for sites with very few navigation items that users users switch between.

Search
We have found that the importance of search on your mobile site is on par with the importance of search on your desktop site. Your users may have more success navigating your site through search than through the navigation and your mobile site should reflect that. Depending on the importance of search to your site’s users, we recommend one of three options:

- **Collapse the search into the navigation and show it when the navigation is open.** This is best when search is used less often than navigation.

- **Collapse the search under its own toggle and have it display when tapped.** This is best when search is used as often as navigation.
• **Keep the search field always visible in the header.** This is best when search is the primary method of navigation.

**Shopping Cart**

Easy access to the cart is a necessary feature for good user experience on your mobile site. We recommend having access to the cart in the header and showing the current cart status alongside the icon or cart text. For placement, we recommend having the cart icon in the top right of your header to reinforce the mental map of moving forward through the checkout process.

Does your desktop site use a mini cart? These are often extremely effective on mobile devices as users have an easy way to check the contents of their cart without having to navigate to a new page. If you opt for a mini cart, we recommend these options for displaying this content:

• **Use an off-canvas sidebar to display the cart when the user taps the icon.** This is the better option if your users tend to add more than one item to their cart, as it makes it easier to scroll through a larger list or manage options. Users are able to perform all of the actions necessary to manage the cart without navigating to a new page. They also have quick access to the checkout without needing to go to a cart page first. This is also a good option to use if you have an off-canvas sidebar for your navigation as it maintains the mental map of the site.

• **Use a popover cart that covers the screen.** This is a better option if users are adding a smaller number of items to cart, as it can otherwise cause the user to lose context on the page as they move through the list of items. This is also an effective method if you are using a push down or popover navigation as it mirrors that interaction method.

**Promotional Banners**

You may have promotional banners or advertising banners in the header. While this content is valuable on mobile, it’s important to weigh the value of the banner against the amount of screen real estate those banners are occupying. Too many items in the header can create a cluttered feeling
for users on small screens and can push content too far down the page. We recommend one of several options for displaying promotions or advertisements in the header:

- **Only show the promos on the homepage and hide them as users get deeper into the site.** This is a good method if promotional banners are important for encouraging engagement with the site initially.

- **Only show the promos on relevant pages.** If your promotion is relevant to the purchasing flow, it may make sense to only show it when a purchasing decision is being made — such as on the Product Display Page or on the cart page.

- **Collapse the promos into the navigation and show them when the navigation is open.** This is the best option when you want to show your promotional banners, but do not want to sacrifice any initial real estate. It is most effective when users are encouraged to engage with the site navigation.

- **Create mobile-specific promotional banners that are optimized for vertical real estate.** These can be shown on every page, but are small enough to be an effective trade-off with screen real estate.

- **Move promotional banners to the footer.** As we’ll explore further later, the footer is an excellent place to ‘save’ users who are about to bounce. If a user has reached your footer, they have likely not found the content they want on your page. A promotional banner may re-engage this user with content that is relevant to them.

- **Remove the promotions entirely.** This is the best option if screen real estate is much more important than the promos or if promos are being used to fill space on desktop.

**Footer**

We recommend adding a ‘Back to Top’ option for users at the top of the footer. This is useful for long pages and makes it easy for users who are less technically adept to return to the navigation or cart. We generally recommend keeping the majority of your existing footer links, but
prioritizing them below things like email newsletter signup or social links. We also recommend using icons to represent social media options in the footer to save space and prevent visual clutter.

Some users may want to view the desktop experience instead of the mobile experience. While you should strive to provide the same content and a much better experience for users using the mobile site, it may be worthwhile to provide some users the ability to return to the desktop site if they desire.

We recommend converting any contact numbers in the footer into a clearer CTA for directly tapping to initiate a phone call. This makes it obvious what will happen when a user taps on the number. Some less technically proficient users may not realize they can call directly from the page and this option makes that clearer.
Site Pages

Homepage

As with any page on your website, you want to lead with a primary CTA above the fold. On the homepage, that’s often a promotional banner or the main categories for the site. Your design team should make the best decisions for content placement based on the goal of the user for each page and based on your ranking of each component on your homepage in terms of content priority.

Homepages often lead with a large hero banner or marketing carousel. Depending on the treatment of these images, we generally recommend maintaining this item as the primary item on the homepage. These images can sometimes have text or CTA that are too small when displayed on a mobile device. If this is the case with your site, this is a prime opportunity to provide mobile-specific content. If not, our recommendation is to adapt the content available into a similar treatment on mobile.

Your homepage may have a list of recommended items or items currently on sale. We recommend handling this content in one of two ways:

- **Provide this content in a swipeable carousel.** This is an excellent method if vertical screen real estate is at a premium and you want to display a large number of items. A carousel for product content encourages users to move through a large number of related items without losing context for the section.

- **Provide this content in a grid view.** This is the best option when this content is the primary content for the home page. If the majority of your users are visiting your homepage to find this content, providing it in an easily scrollable section is the best way to show them everything that is available.

Your homepage may have a list of category links or an image grid to enable users to navigate further into your site. We recommend one of three methods for dealing with this content depending on its importance to your user’s progression through the site:
• **Display the list of categories in an easy-to-scroll link list.** This section may also include accordions for subcategories if there are many sub-navigation links provided. This is the best option if your users tend to use homepage navigation as the primary way to navigate through the site. Ideally, this section should mirror the layout of your navigation.

• **Display a grid of categories with an image or icon for each category.** This is the best option if you have six or fewer categories and images are integral to helping the user understand what each category contains.

• **Hide the category links and rely on the navigation for this content instead.** This is the best option if you are using an overt navigation, want to encourage more users to use the navigation, or want to encourage a different focus for users on this page.

**Product List Page (PLP)**

Generally, PLPs on desktop lead with a large header banner for each category. It is important to provide users with a core action when they land on this page, so we want to ensure that, on mobile, the products are at least partially visible above the fold. This means that header images should be kept as small as possible while still communicating their message. We generally recommend one of two options for headers at the top of the PLP:

• **Show the header image.** There may be a need for a mobile-specific image here without text. The current imagery has text that may appear too small on mobile devices. This is the best option if your imagery is

Bose uses category title rather than header image on mobile sites
the most effective way to communicate the type of content present in this section.

• **Replace the header image with a category title.** Titles often take up less real estate and can effectively communicate the content on the page. This is the best option if your images do not format well on small screens or they are too tall and push the majority of the content below the fold.

**Filters**

We recommend placing filters at the top of the page, but collapsing them under an expandable content block. This keeps the filters available, but makes it so the products are seen above the fold. Keeping the relationship between the filters and the products is an important consideration. Knowing that, we generally recommend one of two options for filters:

• **Place filters in an expandable accordion that pushes content down the page when it’s open.** This is the least technically complex option and is often best for demographics that are less technically capable. This is the best option when filters are selected one by one and the page refreshes when a filter has been clicked.

• **Place filters in a fly-out or popover that keeps some portion of the products visible.** This option visually reinforces the relationship between the filters and the products being updated. This option is best if your product list is updated automatically when a filter is selected.

**Pagination**

We recommend keeping pagination at the top and bottom of the page, but replacing the small links with a select box. This solution works best for small screens as it does not require users to tap smaller targets and can consolidate long lists of links into a smaller area.

**Columns**

We recommend a two-column grid layout for the product list. We’ve found that two columns tends to provide the best balance between image size and products per screen. In landscape, we recommend using a three-column layout.
Alternately, you can opt to provide users with the ability to toggle information density in this section. Depending on the amount of content presented on your PLP, it may make sense to give users the option to view a less information dense layout of your products. This is usually the best option if users are adding to cart directly from the PLP instead of going to the Product Detail Page (PDP) before adding to cart.

‘Quick Look’

Some desktop sites have the ability to open a ‘Quick Look’ when tapping on a product. This can be a great way to quickly add an item to cart without having to go directly to the PDP. On mobile, we recommend one of two options:

• **Move the ‘Quick Look’ option into its own button below each product on the PLP.** This is a good option if the ‘Quick Look’ functionality is used often and the PDP does not contain information necessary to the purchase decision.

• **Remove the ability to ‘Quick Look’ and just take users directly to the PDP.** This removes the clutter that having a repetitive button next to each item can create. It also helps focus the user’s attention on the product itself. This is the best option if the majority of users make the purchasing decision on the PDP.

Product Detail Page (PDP)

It’s vital to focus the PDP on your users’ core action on this page. Along with your Cart and Checkout pages, the PDP call to action is one of the most influential on your site. We strongly recommend designing the PDP in a way that brings the ‘Add to Cart’ button as high up the page as possible — ideally making it visible on initial load. Our analytics have shown that this focus often results in higher conversions than pages where the ‘Add to Cart’ is further down the page.

We recommend displaying all extraneous information below the ‘Add to Cart’ button to help encourage users to move forward with their purchasing decision. Our recommendation for hierarchy order is:
1. Title
2. Price
3. Rating
4. Image Gallery
5. Color, Size, & Quantity Selector
6. ‘Add to Cart’ Button
7. Product Description
8. Sharing/Store Locator
9. Recommended Products
10. Reviews

**Product Image Gallery**
We recommend using a swipe-enabled image carousel for the product image gallery. These galleries can have several different forms of control schemes. Combining these control schemes can also be a good way to reach a common ground between them. We recommend one of several options when using a carousel:

- **Left and right arrows**
  These are often best for a demographic that is less tech savvy. Arrows give obvious controls for users to move through the images available. These controls generally overlap the image so they should be used with caution if your images rely heavily on their left and right hordes.

- **Thumbnails**
  Thumbnails can often be used without arrows to show the user how to move through the available images. They tend to take up more space so they can push the CTA further down the page. This is the best option if your secondary images are necessary for making a purchasing decision — for instance, showing the front and back of apparel items.

- **Arrows and thumbnails**
  This is usually the best option for showcasing all of the images available, as well as making it clear to users on how to move through the images. This is the most overt method of showing the interactions for the carousel.
• **Hinting**  
  This method relies on visual cues for showing swipe interactions instead of overt form controls. Instead of controls, you can show the second image clipped off on the right side of the screen. This indicates to the user that there is more content and that they can swipe to see it. This is a great method for more tech savvy demographics as it removes unnecessary visual clutter.

• **Pips**  
  This method uses small dots to show progression through a carousel. For many users, pips are a good indicator that there is more content they can find. This is a good option for carousels where knowing the number of items is important to the user. One thing to be aware of is that even though these are often hard to interact with, users tend to try to tap the pips to move through the carousel.

• **No Controls**  
  Showing no controls can be a good option if secondary images are not necessary to the purchasing decision. In some cases, it may make sense to lighten the page load and make it easier for the user by only showing one image out of the gallery.

**Image Zoom**

Enabling users to zoom in on products can help reinforce their purchasing decision by eliminating doubt. This is extremely useful on small screens where images have to be smaller than ideal by virtue of the device size. We recommend one of two options for enabling zoom on your images:

• **Pinch to zoom**  
  For this option, we add the ability to pinch to zoom on the images alongside a 'Zoom' button to account for both tech savvy and less savvy users. This reinforces a native-like feel for your images and helps users feel comfortable with the interaction. While the hint text helps, this is generally the best option for a more technically savvy demographic.

• **Tap to zoom**  
  This option gives users the ability to tap on the image to trigger a zoomed-in view. Often, this zoomed view will take over the entire page.
and the user will be able to scroll around the image. This is a good option for less tech savvy users.

**Product View & ‘Write A Review’**

We recommend removing the ‘Write a Review’ action from the ratings at the top of the page to help focus the user’s attention on the main CTA of the page. We recommend collapsing the review and product description sections by default to show users what content is available to them. Users can then tap on those sections to engage with them. We recommend one of three options for this section:

- **Have Product Description and Reviews collapsed in an accordion and enable users to tap to expand them.** This is the best option if the product description is either long or not explicitly necessary for purchase. This is also useful if products tend to have large numbers of reviews.

- **Have Product Description visible, but collapse Reviews.** This is the better option if Product Description is necessary for the purchase decision.

- **Have both Product Description and Reviews always visible.** This is the best option if reviews are few in number or limited and Product Description is necessary for the purchase decision.

Similar to the recommendation on the homepage, we recommend using swipe-enabled blocks for Recommended Content sections. This pattern is good for showing a user additional items in a section without taking up too much screen real estate. This content is valuable even without swiping.
Cart Page

There are two main goals for a Cart page: to provide the users with access to the products in their cart so they can update them and/or reinforce their purchasing decision and to encourage the user to tap the Checkout button to progress further in the purchasing flow. Knowing this, we recommend designing the Cart page in a way that displays the Checkout button as well as at least some of the cart items above the fold.

We recommend leading the page with a Cart header as well as the total price of items in the cart. Immediately following the header, we recommend showing a Checkout button to enable users who are ready to check out to move through the process as quickly as possible.

For users who are not ready to check out, we recommend providing cart item details in a two-column layout. We have found that this layout is the most effective in showing cart details, quantity, price, while still showing thumbnails for each cart item. By keeping the details beside the image, the thumbnails should be large enough that users can determine that they have selected the correct item. Users should also have access to a ‘Remove’ option and the ability to update quantity.

Following the cart items, we recommend displaying the price breakdown for the user followed by another Checkout button. By replicating the Checkout action, users who need the additional reinforcement of scrolling through the cart are rewarded with their desired goal instead of being forced to scroll back to the top of the page.
Checkout Page

Once the user has engaged with the Checkout, we recommend doing as much as possible to ease the flow through to the ‘Purchase’ action. One of the best ways to keep users engaged with the process is to make sure they have to enter as little information as possible. We recommend ensuring that users are presented with the absolute minimum number of input options as they move through the process.

We strongly recommend using the appropriate input types for telephone, zip code, and credit card to ensure users are presented with the appropriate keyboard to ease the information entry process.

If your checkout follows a multi-step process, we recommend providing users with insight into which part of the step they are on as well as how many total steps they are required to complete. If your checkout is a single page, providing reinforcing visual cues as they move through the process is recommended to keep users engaged with the flow.

We strongly recommend having an option preselected for the user to ‘Ship to Billing Address.’ This limits the amount of info a user has to enter if their billing and shipping addresses are the same. It also reduces cognitive load on the user by presenting them with fewer required fields at the outset.

To optimize credit card input, we recommend removing the user’s need to select what type of credit card they have. This option is best when there are standard credit cards to select from and there is not a ‘Gift Card’ option in this section.
Why Design Matters

79% of smartphone owners use their devices in their path to purchase at least once a month and those who rely on mobile most, buy more. In fact, a Deloitte study found that shoppers who use mobile in-store convert at a 40% higher rate than those who don’t. A poorly designed mobile presence that delivers an unsatisfactory mobile experience won’t quell your customers’ appetite for mobile shopping, it will simply lead them to take their money elsewhere. Survey research from 2014 found that 91% consumers have abandoned a brand based on a poor mobile experience

In this guide, we’ve presented our recommendations for designing and delivering an optimal mobile experience that consistently meets customers’ needs for information, convenience and aesthetics. Ultimately, the quality of your mobile presence is what determines whether your mobile site drives revenue or simply drives customers away.
Want To Learn More?

Design Matters: How To Create An Optimal Mobile Shopping Experience is part four in a four-part series, The Definitive Guide To Mobile Shopping: Learn, Plan, Invest, Execute.

The previous installments focused on introducing you to the mobile shopping economy, guiding you through the mobile strategy development process and helping you choose the right platform for your mobile website.
Using Mobify, you can create beautiful mobile shopping experiences that help your customers discover, choose and buy products, and unlock all of the capabilities of mobile devices, to make the mobile shopping experience the best shopping experience of all.

Mobify is a platform for extending your digital storefront to mobile touchpoints.
How Mobify works

Mobify’s platform has three core features that accelerate retailers’ mobile maturity across web, apps and retail locations.

**Mobile Experience Management**
Developer-friendly tools for extending your digital storefront to every mobile shopping touchpoint.

- Launch web and app projects in as little as six weeks.
- Optimize for individual smartphones and tablets with device-level design precision.
- Use pre-built shopping components leveraging the latest mobile shopping best practices.
- Out of the box content and feature parity across all mobile touchpoints.

**Testing & Release Console**
Instantly test, preview and deploy updates to your mobile projects.

- Automated testing grid delivers instantaneous notifications if code is not working properly.
- Conduct real user acceptance testing by previewing projects on any mobile device before publishing.
- Simple, one click deploy.

**Performance Optimization & Delivery Network**
Guaranteed fast and reliable customer experiences from anywhere around the world.

- CDN with over 55 global points of presence.
- 99.999% uptime.
Strategic Design And Development Services

Create high-performing shopping experiences on smartphones and tablets by leveraging the most flexible technology on the market and almost a decade of Mobify’s data-driven design and development best practices.

Working with Mobify is just like having another department in your business. I call it the Mobify department. It’s just so easy – I wish I had Mobify two years ago.

Richard Cohene
VP of Marketing, Beyond the Rack

Mobify is always available. They help us make changes within days, sometimes within hours if we really need it. It’s been absolutely great working with them.

Hilary Spencer
Head of Product and UX, ideel
Appendix

1 http://www.canoe.ca/Canoe/Money/News/2015/02/09/22226876-relaxnews.html
2 http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/120925/file-2420361524-pdf/Content_for_download/Mobile_App_Spend_2015_final.pdf?submissionGuid=8dda6073-6224-4be2-b5fe-00e77b1ac05a
4 http://mobilemarketingmagazine.com/34-per-cent-abandon-poor-mobile-experiences
Mobify is a mobile shopping platform used by leading Fortune 500 and Internet Retailer 500 companies to drive hundreds of millions of dollars in mobile revenue each year. Our company is built on equal parts rigorous research, product development, and industry leading customer service. Our team is driven by a strong desire to continuously innovate in the sphere of mobile shopping.

That mission, and the corresponding execution, has allowed Mobify to deliver revolutionary mobile products for leading brands around the globe.

For more information about Mobify, please visit us at mobify.com, email us at hello@mobify.com, or give us a call at 1-866-502-5880.

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